

BENFIELDSIDE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1922.

To the Chairman and Members of the Benfieldside Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the pleasure to submit for your consideration my Annual Report upon the Health and Sanitary circumstances of the Benfieldside Urban District for the year ending December 31st, 1922. A circular, as to the contents and arrangements of Annual Reports, has been received from the Ministry of Health, and I have followed the instructions given therein in compiling this, my Second Ordinary Report. Survey Reports of a more full and detailed character will be required every five years, commencing from the year 1921, when my first Ordinary Report was issued.

The year 1922 has been one of marked industrial depression, and only for the unemployment benefit obtainable a great amount of sickness from malnutrition would have resulted. The amount of Poor Law Relief paid in the District in 1922, amounted to £2,400. This compares with £831 paid in 1921.

The effects of the unemployment has been felt by all sections of the community, but brighter prospects are, I think, in sight, and it is to be hoped before many months pass, the number of unemployed will rapidly decrease and your District return to more prosperous conditions.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area,	...	...	...	...	...	1525 Acres.
Population (1921),	...	...	...	...	...	8978.
Number of Inhabited Houses (1922),	...	...	...	...	...	1803.
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers,	...	...	...	...	...	1910.
Rateable Value,	...	...	...	...	...	£26,564.
Sum represented by a Penny Rate,	...	...	...	...	...	£95

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

						Total.	Males.	Females
BIRTHS	{	Legitimate,	...	...	...	222	110	112
		Illegitimate,	...	...	...	11	7	4

Birth-rate for the year, 25·4 per 1,000.

						Total.	Males.	Females.
DEATHS	{	...	...	...	...	124	64	60

Death-rate for the year, 13·5 per 1,000.

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of child-birth, from Sepsis, 1 ; from other causes, 0.

Deaths of Infants under one year : Legitimate, 35 ; Illegitimate, 1 ; Total, 36.

Infantile death-rate per 1,000 births, 154·5.

Deaths from Measles (all ages),	...	...	...	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages),	...	...	...	5
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years),	...	...	...	1

Birth-rate for Benfieldside District, 1922, ... 25·4 per 1,000.

Birth-rate for all England and Wales, 1922, ... 20·6 per 1,000.

Death-rate for Benfieldside District, 1922, ... 13·5 per 1,000.

Death-rate for all England and Wales, 1922, ... 12·9 per 1,000.

Infantile death-rate for Benfieldside, per 1,000 births in 1922, ... 154.


Infantile death-rate for all England and Wales, per 1,000 births in 1922, ... 77.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

A great many children still die every year, who ought not to die, and in many cases this is due to ignorance on the part of the mothers where the feeding of their babies is concerned. Regular attendance at the Welfare Centres, where advice is given by trained nurses, would assist materially in reducing the Infantile Mortality.

Among other causes operating in causing the deaths of many Infants, may be mentioned :—

- (1) Poverty and overcrowding in many two-roomed houses.
- (2) Unsuitable and insufficient food and clothing.
- (3) Insufficient accommodation for the proper storing of food.



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A great number of deaths of Infants is also due to pre-natal influences and it is in this direction that properly trained Health Visitors can do a vast amount of good work by keeping in close touch with the expectant mother for a few months before the birth of her child.

More than half the total Infantile deaths in the Benfieldside District occurred during the first quarter of the year, when the epidemic of Influenza was prevalent. This, no doubt, in some measure accounts for the high Infantile death-rate in your area, as 10 deaths of infants under 1 year were due to Influenza or its complications.

The following Table gives the causes of death of residents of all ages :—

CAUSES OF DEATH.	MALES	FEMALES.
Whooping Cough	3	2
Diphtheria	1	1
Influenza	1	5
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	1	3
Other Tubercular Diseases	1	0
Cancer	2	5
Diabetes	2	0
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	4	3
Heart Disease	2	6
Arterio-Sclerosis	2	1
Bronchitis	9	6
Pneumonia	8	6
Other Respiratory Diseases	0	1
Diarrhœa (under 2 years)	1	0
Nephritis	1	2
Puerperal Sepsis	0	1
Premature Birth, &c.	8	5
Violence	2	1
Other Defined Diseases	16	12
	64	60

The population of your District, as taken by the Registrar General, is 9,174.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

DISEASE.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	22	20	2
Scarlet Fever	19	16	0
Enteric Fever... ..	0	0	0
Pneumonia (Acute Lobar)	19	2	14 (all forms)
Puerperal Fever	1	1	1
Erysipelas	7	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	7	1	0
Tuberculosis :—			
(a) Pulmonary { M. 6			
{ F. 5			
{ Total 11	11	0	4
(b) Non-Pulmonary { M. 5			
{ F. 1			
{ Total 6	6	0	1

The following table shows the ages of occurrence of the different Infectious Diseases :—

	Under 1 year.	1-2 years.	2-3 years.	3-4 years.	4-5 years.	5-10 years.	10-15 years.	15-20 years.	20-35 years.	35-45 years.	45-65 years.
Diphtheria	3	2	2	5	5	1	3	...	1
Scarlet Fever	4	3	6	5	1	...	...	...
Pneumonia	3	1	1	...	2	...	3	4	1	4
Puerperal Fever	1	...
Erysipelas	1	1	...	...	5
Pulmonary Tuberculosis...	3	...	5	3	...
Other Tubercular Diseases	2	3	1	...	...	...	...

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.—7 cases of this disease were notified during the year. 1 case was sent to Eye Hospital. All the others were treated at home and a Doctor and Nurse attended regularly. Complete recovery resulted in all cases.

There were 5 deaths during the year from **TUBERCULOSIS** and all had been previously notified. Prompt notification seems to be carried out by the local Practitioners.

Deaths from Diphtheria,	2	...	Ages, 2 and 3 years.
Deaths from Pneumonia,	14	...	Ages, 2, 5, 10, and 11 months, 2, 2, 2, 2, 4, 9, 19, 36, 71, and 73 years.
Deaths from Pulmonary Tuberculosis,	4	...	Ages, 11, 26, 35, and 52 years.
Other deaths from Tubercular Diseases,	1	...	Age, 11 months.
Deaths from Whooping Cough,	5	...	Ages, 9 months, 1, 1½, 2, and 2 years.

CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

In January, 1922, an epidemic of Influenza was present in your District, in common with other places. Practically 50 per cent. of the inhabitants were affected—the largest proportion being young children and elderly people. Pneumonia supervening was not common. All the Schools were closed for three weeks, from January 16th to February 3rd.

Apart from the above, the severe weather which was experienced during all the summer months resulted in many minor ailments. Rheumatism, “colds,” and diseases of the respiratory system were very prevalent.

Summary of Nursing Arrangements, Hospitals, and other Institutions available for the District.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.—The local Nursing Association provides a trained Nurse for the purpose of visiting the sick poor in their own homes. Medical, Surgical, and Gynecological cases are attended to, but not any Infectious Diseases, as the latter are removed to the Isolation Hospital. The Association is supported solely by voluntary contributions and is managed by a local committee of ladies. A Health Visitor, appointed and paid by the Durham County Council, visits the District regularly. There is also a certified Midwife practising in the District, and the County Council contribute towards her salary.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES.—The two Centres situated in your District, one at Blackhill and the other at Shotley Bridge, are well attended and both are doing very useful work. Financial assistance is received from the County Council.

The TUBERCULOSIS DISPENSARY, provided by the County Council and situated in Delves Lane, Consett, is open weekly on Thursdays. Any cases of Tuberculosis from your District requiring treatment are attended to.

There is no institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate or homeless children, except the Poor Law Institution at Lanchester.

HOSPITALS.

(1) LEADGATE ISOLATION HOSPITAL for the treatment of Infectious Diseases. Ample accommodation is provided for all cases.

(2) HOWDON BANK SMALL POX HOSPITAL.

(3) CONSETT IRON CO. INFIRMARY for the treatment of accidents to workmen employed in their own works and collieries.

(4) ROYAL VICTORIA INFIRMARY and other Hospitals in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

(5) LANCHESTER UNION HOSPITAL for the treatment of Poor Law cases.

(6) RICHARD MURRAY HOSPITAL, situated at Blackhill, for the treatment of general medical and surgical cases, and for maternity cases. A resident Medical Officer has been appointed to this Hospital and the following is a short account of the work done from June to December, 1922. The Hospital was opened in June, 1922, for the reception of cases

General Wards, 117 patients—Medical cases, 38; Surgical cases, 79.

Maternity Wards, 51 patients—Confinements, 38; Ante-natal cases, 8; Post-natal cases, 5.

Operations, 137—Major, 15; Minor, 122.

Total patients—168, of whom 55 per cent. in the General Wards and 25 per cent. in the Maternity Wards resided in the Beaufieldside area

MOTOR AMBULANCES.—Infectious cases are removed to hospital by Motor Ambulance, and one is also available for the removal of Non-Infectious and Accident cases to the different hospitals when necessary.

LABORATORY WORK.

The College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne, by arrangement with the Durham County Council, examine all pathological and bacteriological specimens sent by Medical Practitioners free of charge.

An adequate supply of Diphtheria Anti-toxin and Vaccines is kept in stock.

ADOPTIVE ACTS in force in your area are :—Public Health Amendment Act, 1889, (Part III); Infectious Diseases Notification Act, 1889; Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890; and Sections 15 to 25, and 27 to 33 inclusive, comprised in Part II; Sections 34 to 42 and 44 to 51 comprised in Part III, Part IV, Part V, and Part VI; Sections 79, 80, and 81 comprised in Part VII and Part VIII; and Section 95 comprised in Part X of the Public Health Amendment Act, 1907; and the Baths and the Wash-houses Acts in 1846, 1878, 1882, and 1899.

BYE-LAWS.—New Streets and Buildings, 1904; Slaughtering Houses, 1904; Prevention of Nuisances, 1904; Common Lodging Houses, 1904; Cleansing of Footways, 1904; Dairies, Milkshops, and Cowsheds, 1910.

INSPECTION OF FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—

Factories and Bakehouses ...	Inspections, 12.	Notices, 0.	Prosecutions, 0.
Workshops	„ 76.	„ 2.	„ 0.

REGISTERED WORKSHOPS.—Bakehouses, 1 ; Boot-repairers, etc., 6 ; Dressmakers, 3 ; Joiners and Builders, 7 ; Blacksmiths, 3 ; Plumbers, 2 ; Saddlers, 1 ; Monumental Masons, 1 ; Tailors, 3 ; Motor Repairers, 3. Total, 30.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The following is a summary of the work done in the Inspector of Nuisances' Department during the year :—

	No. of Informal Notices.	Formal Notices.	Nuisances Abated.
Dwelling Houses and Schools—			
(a) Foul Conditions	14	...	14
(b) Structural Defects	15	3	15
(c) Overcrowding	30	11	26
Cowsheds	3	...	3
Slaughter Houses	4	...	4
Ashpits and Privies	1	...	1
Water-closets	11	...	11
Defective Traps	1	...	1
Other Faults in House Drains ...	5	...	5
Total	84	14	80

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION AT THE END OF THE YEAR, 1922.

Water-closets.
627

Ash-closets.
488

Ashpit Privies.
612

During the year 2 ashpit privies and 1 ash-closet were converted into water-closets.

The high cost of labour and materials still stands in the way of the conversion of dry-closets to the water-carriage system, but it is hoped when opportunities occur that more Sanitary progress will be made in this direction.

SEWAGE.—There are 34 houses and farm buildings in the area, for which no sewers are available and these are drained to cesspits or on to land. The whole of the remaining houses are connected up with the Council's sewers. The whole of the sewage is treated at the outfall works by sedimentation and filtration. A very satisfactory effluent has been obtained during the year. Sufficient land is prepared to treat the whole of the sewage if for any reason the filters should not be available.

MAIN SEWERS.—It has been necessary to take up and relay 250 yards of main sewers, which had been disturbed by subsidences from colliery workings, during the year.

SCAVENGING.—The removal of house refuse is done part by direct labour, and part by contract. The work has been fairly well done by the contractors, but not with the same regularity as in that part of the area done by direct labour.

COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.—There are 14 cowkeepers and dairymen in the District and all have been registered under the Milk and Dairies Act, 1922. The cowsheds have been regularly visited and received the necessary attention. During the year one has been remodelled and one other had been repaired.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.—There are 8 registered slaughter houses. These have been periodically inspected, and have been found in a clean condition. A thorough inspection of all meat killed is almost impossible under the present conditions of slaughtering. A small quantity, about 5 stones, of meat was condemned and destroyed, having become unfit for food.

There are no Common Lodging-houses nor underground Bake-houses in the District.

FOOD, ETC.—The 1 bake-house in your District has been kept in a good Sanitary condition.

DISINFECTION.—38 lots of Infectious bedding were stoved, and 41 houses and 10 schools disinfected during the year. The whole of the elementary schools were disinfected during the early part of the year, when closed, and these have been regularly inspected and no Sanitary defects found. The Medical Officer of Health informs the Inspector of Nuisances of all cases of Infectious disease, and thorough disinfection is carried out in every case.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

1. Medical Officer of Health (part time).
2. Inspector of Nuisances.
3. Health Visitor appointed and paid by the County Council.

HOUSING.

The shortage of houses adequate for the needs and within the means of many of the poorer classes is still very acute and consequently overcrowding still exists in many of the two-roomed houses. At present it is impossible to relieve many of these cases as the people have nowhere else to go, not being able to pay the rent of larger houses. Sub-letting is also prevalent and your Council are dealing with any cases of this nature brought to your notice.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	...	60
(b) As part of a municipal housing scheme	...	...	...	...	...	58

1. *Unfit dwelling-houses.*

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	98
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	...	...	...	22
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	2
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	12

2. *Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	17
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3. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	...	...	...	4
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit :—						
(a) by owners	...	...	...	...	...	4
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	...	...	...	nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	...	...	...	...	...	1

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	...	...	13
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :—						
(a) by owners	...	...	...	...	...	12
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	...	...	...	1

C.—Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1909.

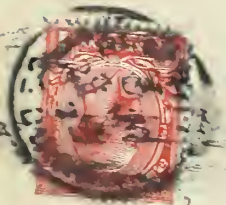
(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	...	...	...	...	...	nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	...	...	...	nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	...	...	...	...	...	nil
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...	...	...	...	nil
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	...	...	...	...	12

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN MURRAY, M.B., BCH.,

*Medical Officer of Health.**The Hawthorns, Blackhill,**March 23rd, 1923.*



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